



## **WEST NILE VIRUS**

### **PERSONAL PRECAUTIONS**

**Q: What can I do to reduce my risk of becoming infected with West Nile virus?**

**A:** From April to October, when mosquitoes are most active, take the following precautions:

- If outside from dusk to dawn when mosquitoes are most active, or during the day in an area where there are weeds, tall grass or bushes, people should wear protective clothing, such as long pants, loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts, and socks, and consider the use of an insect repellent containing DEET.

Products with a low concentration of DEET may be appropriate for situations where exposure to mosquitoes is minimal. Higher concentrations of DEET may be useful in highly infested areas or with species that are more difficult to repel. Use of DEET concentrations above 50 percent has been associated with increased skin irritation and similar reactions. *Where appropriate, consider using non-chemical ways to deter biting insects such as protective clothing (as outlined above), window- and door screens, and wearable netting when camping.*

- **Use DEET according to manufacturer's directions on the label**
- *As with chemical exposure in general, pregnant women should take care to avoid exposure to DEET whenever practical.*
- *Do not allow children to handle mosquito repellent.*
- *Do not apply DEET directly to children. Apply to your own hands and then put it on the child.*
- *DEET is effective for about four hours. Avoid prolonged or excessive use of DEET. Use sparingly to cover exposed skin and clothing. Do not apply to skin covered by clothing.*
- *Wash all treated skin and clothing with soap and water after returning indoors.*
- *Never use repellents over cuts, wounds or irritated skin.*
- *Store DEET out of reach of children.*
- **Note** *that vitamin B, ultrasonic devices and incense have not been shown to be effective in preventing mosquito bites.*

**Q: What can I do around my home to help reduce exposure to mosquitoes?**

**A:** Mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing or slow-moving (such as streams or creeks) water. Weeds, tall grass and bushes provide an outdoor home for mosquitoes. They can enter homes through unscreened windows or doors, or broken screens.

- *Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace all screens that have tears or holes.*
- *Remove all discarded tires from your property.*
- *Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots, or similar water-holding containers.*

- *Make sure roof gutters drain properly. Clean clogged gutters in the spring and fall.*
- *Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs. If not in use, keep empty and covered.*
- *Drain water from pool covers.*
- *Change the water in birdbaths every three to four days.*
- *Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use.*
- *Eliminate any standing water that collects on your property.*
- *Remind or help neighbors to eliminate breeding sites on their properties.*

**For more information about West Nile virus, call the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.2378.**

